

Spring 2008

# The Brazier Bulletin

The Newsletter of the Society of Private and Pioneer Numismatists

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## Editor's Observations

I am excited to report the formation of the Pioneer Gold Forum (see two lead articles) which we hope will lead to new findings on the authenticity and origins of many controversial pioneer gold coin issues. Your editor wishes to thank those who are participating and contributing their time and expertise for this important educational effort.

On the other hand, we follow with an article about the unfortunate turn around of between the numismatic community and the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society. Without a final signed Memorandum Of Understanding which the previous ANA Executive Director assured us was forthcoming, his counterpart at the San Francisco Museum & Historical Society, Eric Cristoffersen, unilaterally took all the money (almost \$4.8 million) raised from the sale of the S.F. Old Mint commemorative coins for the renovation of The Old Mint WITHOUT agreeing to a money museum (AMGRM). This has been done despite legislation authorizing the funds specifically be used for "rehabilitating the Historic Old Mint in San Francisco as a city museum AND AN AMERICAN COIN AND GOLD RUSH MUSEUM" (section 5134(f) of title 31).

Apparently, with the ANA leadership in turmoil and the new board not interested in going forward with the museum project, and without any public or numismatic outcry, Mr. Cristoffersen felt he could repudiate 14 years of negotiations and efforts of the numismatic community (see his email to ANA President Barry Stuppler).

If you are as outraged by this as we are, send your letters and emails to ANA President Barry Stuppler, Mr. Cristoffersen and House leader Nancy Pelosi (their emails and addresses follow the article by *Coin World* Editor Beth Deisher).

Other articles include a fascinating story of the Virgil Earp Token, the origins of the Gold Rush town of Coloma and a miner's tale, and new Cal gold discoveries by Mike Locke.

For the pioneer coin historian and researcher are two important articles. One concerns to publication of a new reference concerning the formation of the largest and finest collection of pioneer gold patterns ever formed. The other, by new contributor and researcher, Anthony C. LaVerghetta, is the story of the here-to-fore unknown engraver of the Clark, Gruber & Co. coins.

Enjoy!

*Don*



# **Brasher Bulletin**

## **S.P.P.N. PIONEER GOLD FORUM TACKLES *its* FIRST ISSUE**

**By Donald Kagin**

Last November SPPN's President Don Kagin assembled a "gold ribbon" panel of the leading numismatic experts in the field of Pioneer Gold Coins who agreed to review different controversial issues, thus forming the Pioneer Gold Forum. The goal is to ultimately determine what they are, e.g. original contemporary issues, Restrikes, fantasies, or fakes, their origins, i.e. who might have made them and when, and perhaps why they were made.

Members include representatives of the major grading firms, reference book editors, and specialists collectively representing hundreds of years of experience in this field.

The methodology used was to first email the panelists either scans or photographs of as many specimens of the particular issue in question. These might include micro photographs of suspicious diagnostics as well as known genuine pieces for comparison purposes. A CD was made available for each panelist.

Comments are then fielded from and dispersed to panelist much like a chat room for discussions. Next, a major coin show is agreed upon to bring all suspicious specimens to be viewed and analyzed. The goal is for a determination to be agreed upon by a majority if not all participants. Results are then published

in the Brasher Bulletin.

At the FUN show in Orlando in January, 2008, a dozen panelists conferred on Friday (the usual day for this assemblage) to determine the origins of the \$20 1861 prooflike and overstruck Clark, Gruber, & Co. gold pieces. It was determined unanimously that they were 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fantasies probably made in the 1950s or 1960s. {Check the related story by panelist David McCarthy in this issue}.

The next issue to be vetted will be the Proof and prooflike 1853 U.S. Assay Office \$20 gold pieces, which have a long history of controversy dating from the 1960s. Anyone possessing information or specimens that could contribute to this endeavor is urged to contact Brasher editor and SPPN president Don Kagin at [Don@Kagins.com](mailto:Don@Kagins.com).

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## SPPN Pioneer Gold Forum Determines "1861" \$20 "Clark Gruber & Co." Prooflike Specimens are Fantasy Pieces

**By David McCarthy**

For several years, a number of numismatists have felt that the so-called prooflike Clark Gruber \$20s were suspicious. The general consensus seemed to be that the fabric of these coins was off, and that they looked more like 20<sup>th</sup> century products than the work of the firm of Clark, Gruber & Company. In spite of this, most major pioneer specialists and auction houses handled these pieces for decades. Even the independent grading firms certified them.

Before I had the opportunity to examine any in person, I was told that they have unusually deep mirrors and a "dished" appearance, rather than the normal flat fields that one is accustomed to seeing on most Clark Gruber issues. Others remarked upon the fact that many of these pieces were overstruck on other coins (an Assay \$20, a 57-S \$20 and a federal \$10, among others) – an unusual, although not entirely unheard of state of affairs in the world of pioneer gold coins. The final and perhaps most telling point was that all of the extant pieces traced their pedigrees back to a mysterious "Denver Man" in the 1950s.

Not long ago, Don Kagin and I were examining a collection of pioneer gold that con-

tained five 1861 \$20 Clark Grubers: one overstruck example, three obviously prooflike pieces in various grades and one lightly circulated piece that had traces of satiny to frosty luster on it (this piece did not exhibit the dished fields and strong edges found on all of the other pieces). This seemed to be a perfect opportunity to examine a group of the controversial pieces together and determine whether there were any clues as to the nature of the prooflike and overstruck examples.



All of the overstruck and prooflike pieces exhibited a few noteworthy traits: each coin's fields were highly concave as a result of heavy basining (imparting a convex shape to the surface of a die, resulting in a coin shape that is slightly

convex) also, the edge reeding was unusually sharp with strong squared-off rims (while most 1861 \$20s that I have examined have soft rims). The central design on the reverse of each coin was well-struck, unlike most of the non-p/l examples that I had seen, and the eye of Liberty seemed to have a slightly different shape from all of the non-p/l coins that I had seen.

My initial impression of the prooflike pieces was that they had been struck much later than the non-p/l coins – their surfaces (even on the circulated examples) had an unusually crisp look to them, and the edges



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were dramatically different from the non-p/l pieces that I had seen. The slight distortion in the shape of the eye on these pieces also made me suspect that they were from different dies than the non-p/l coins.

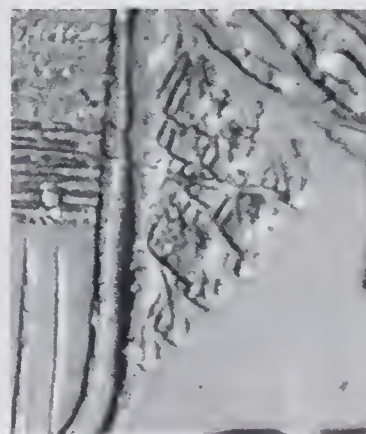
Based upon these observations, I concluded that there was a good possibility that the prooflike pieces had been struck from transfer dies of some sort. Generally, coins from transfer dies exhibit so-called "repeating depressions" in their fields. These are the result of bagmarks and ticks on the surface of the coin from which the dies are copied. A scratch or a bagmark in the field of the host coin is reproduced as a raised area of metal on the surface of the new die – a situation that can only occur when a die is copied from an existing coin.

With this in mind, I examined the group of p/l and overstruck 1861 \$20s. The fields did not show any obvious repeating depressions; however, I concluded that the heavy basing and polishing of the dies could have eliminated most evidence of repeating depressions in the open fields. If this was the case, the only repeating depressions left on the coins would be hidden in the design elements. A minute's scrutiny of the pieces was all that was necessary to locate a repeating depression that was shared by all of the examples: an apparent scratch, beginning in the horizontal stripes at the upper right of the eagle's shield, which exited through the tuft of feather's below the eagle's left wing. This depression, which would have appeared as a thin ridge of metal on the surface of the die, could not have existed on a genuine die. The conclusion reached was that all of the prooflike pieces in this group had to be struck from transfer dies, making them fantasies struck in order to fool collectors at some time after the original coins were produced.

We brought several examples of these specimens to the annual FUN show in January. A

dozen of the Forum members concluded unanimously that indeed these proof-like \$20s were all clever twentieth century fantasies.

PCGS immediately recalled and repurchased those specimens they had previously holdered, and relabeled them appropriately as "fantasies". Any one believing they possess such specimens is encouraged to contact the appropriate grading service.





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## ANA Pullout Won't Stop 'Granite Lady' Museum *Historical Society Vision Remains Same*



**By Beth Deisher, Coin World Staff**

Plans to restore the Second San Francisco Mint – known as the Granite Lady – and to open it in 2011 as a museum and visitor center are on schedule, despite the fact that the American Numismatic Association Board of Governors voted Oct. 15 to “terminate” ANA’s role in the museum project.

Erik C. Christoffersen, executive director of the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society, said Oct. 21 that although plans for the facility have changed in the last year – especially the last three months – the SFMHS remains committed to exhibits that will relate the historic role of the Granite Lady and explain the Gold Rush era and coinage.

“Our vision has not changed in the last 18 months,” Christoffersen said.

The ANA’s vision of the project has

changed dramatically in early October when ANA President Barry Stuppler learned from Christoffersen that despite years of cooperative efforts and negotiations as recent as June, SFMHS and ANA had never finalized a memorandum of understanding or any other agreement regarding a partnership for the Old Mint museum. Further, the concept of an American Money and Gold Rush Museum and library, for which the ANA had launched a fund drive in May, had been dramatically curtailed more than a year ago. Former ANA Governor Donald H. Kagin, who was instrumental in saving the Old Mint from the wrecking ball in 1994 and spearheading efforts in the numismatic community to have a money museum as part of the restored Old Mint facility (including raising money for the lobby efforts to pass a commemorative coin program), said he was “shocked, dismayed, and profoundly disappointed” to





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learn that ANA no longer has a working relationship with SFMHS.

Kagin said he has a copy of a draft of a memorandum of understanding dated March 2007 that he thought was being finalized by ANA and was unaware major changes had occurred in plans – especially any relating to the money museum.

ANA had anticipated surcharge revenues from the sales of 2006 commemorative coins honoring the Old San Francisco Mint and raising an additional \$4 million to \$5 million to pay for the build-out of the money museum. However, SFMHS is the beneficiary organization specified in the enabling legislation, Public Law 109-230, and in early September it received \$4,746,880 from the United States Mint in surcharges from the sale of commemorative 2006-S San Francisco Old Mint gold \$5 half eagles and silver dollars.

According to the law, the surcharges were authorized for use for "the purpose of rehabilitating the Historic Old Mint in San Francisco as a city museum and an American Coin and Gold Rush Museum."

Christoffersen notes that the

law does not say how much space has to be devoted to each, but added that he is satisfied that the Gold Rush Era and the coins minted in the facility in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – because they played an integral role in the city's development – will be prominent in the overall experience visitors will encounter.

***"surcharges were authorized for use for 'the purpose of rehabilitating the Historic Old Mint in San Francisco as a city museum and an American Coin and Gold Rush Museum'."***

"At this, we still don't know the exact footage each gallery or exhibit will occupy," Christoffersen said. He said the project has moved into the design and development stage and the business model has been developed and is being refined. He described the various stages of work and development as complex because of having to satisfy preservation requirements.

The Granite Lady is one of only five National Historic Landmark buildings in San Francisco and is ranked by the General Services Administration as the second most important government building in the nation for its historical and architectural significance. It was designed by

Arthur Mullett, who designed the Old Executive Office Buildings in Washington D.C., that GSA ranks first.

When the first vision for the Old Mint facility was articulated more than 10 years ago, approximately 12,500 square feet of space on the ground floor was set aside in the plan for the money mu-

seum. A revised plan advanced about 18 months ago reduced the space to approximately 7,800 square feet.

Three months ago, planners decided that the visitor's

center needed more

space, and not enough space had been allocated for back-of-store inventory for a planned gift shop. In addition, planners decided that the ground floor would need a better traffic flow and that the ground floor should be considered a "free zone" rather than an area requiring a paid ticket.

"All of our public spaces have shrunk," including space one allocated for a money museum in the basement floor, Christoffersen said.

However, Christoffersen insists that SFMHS remains dedicated to the project and has not

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lost sight of its coinage legacy. He said the restoration plan will not only preserve the building but dramatically improve it structurally.

Current plans envision "Granite Lady Stations" where visitors on a self-guided tour using iPod-like devices will be able to see each room in the building and learn what its use was when the Mint was operational. He hopes to have a minting press located within the building so that visitors will be able to strike a "coin" as a part of their experience.

Also, Christoffersen suggests that special small exhibits will have places within

the various galleries and help to tell the story of the city's development through various eras.

For example, he notes that the gallery devoted to the 1906 earthquake and fires will relate the Old San Francisco Mint's role in helping the city survive and its later role as a bank instrumental in leading recovery efforts. "Our idea is to turn people on to a topic of interest and point them to other places" where they can continue their journey, Christoffersen said.

Educational activities could continue with books and coins in the museum's gift shop or educational programs he hopes will be part of the museum's offerings. Christoffersen help out hope the ANA and others in the

numismatic community will yet play a role in helping develop the facility, especially in educational programs that may be offered through the facility, once it opens.

## *How you can help:*

Email the following people and let them know you want to see the American Money & Gold Rush Museum in the Old S.F. Mint!

Nancy Pelosi:  
sf.nancy@mail.house.gov

Erik Christoffersen:  
info@sfnhistory.org

Barry Stuppler:  
stuppler@money.org

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## BASS COLLECTION OF PIONEER GOLD PATTERNS — FINEST EVER FORMED

*Reference book in Second Printing*

**By Lena DeMarco Associate Editor**

The Robert Bass Collection—by far the most extensive ever assembled—consists mainly of original gold rush era private Pioneer coiner die trials, patterns, restrikes and related pieces including a few counters, counter-stamps and a pair of dies. Donald H. Kagin, Ph.D. and author of the standard reference, *Private Gold Coins and Patterns of the United States*, spent the last year researching and analyzing the collection. The culmination of this extensive research has been compiled into the reference work titled *The Robert Bass Collection—The Finest Collection of Pioneer Patterns Ever Assembled*.

Initial publishing was limited to 100 copies, and quickly sold out. Now in it's second printing, Kagin's is making available this collector's reference once more. One hundred additional copies are going to be published by March 2008.

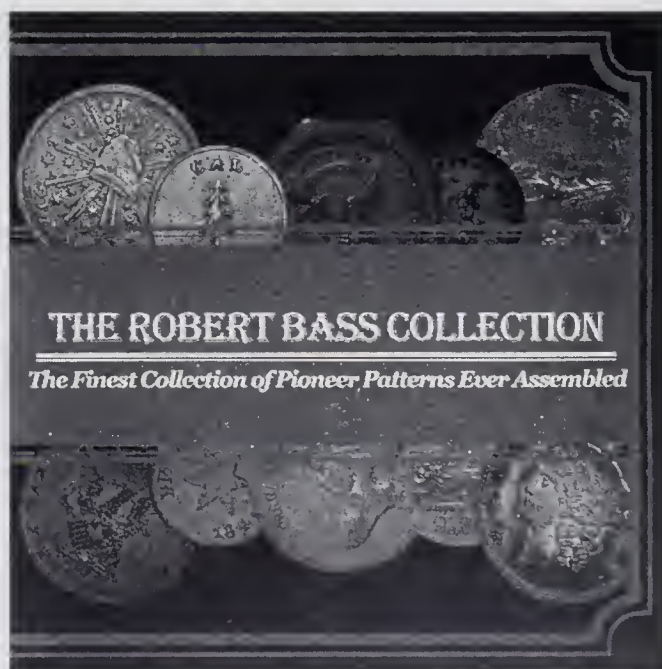
In a note Robert Bass, states that he "persevered and gathered this collection with great affection and satisfaction for 70 years." Bass also collected and sold to Kagin's one of the finest collections of Pioneer Gold, "but the patterns were even scarcer" he determined. As Kagin confirms, "on a coin by coin basis it is the most difficult numismatic series to complete."

Of the 179 items more than thirty different private mints are represented; eleven of which have no known gold coins. Over fifty of the specimens are Unique, with only one known specimen, and over another thirty pieces consist of one of two or three specimens known.

Color images of every specimen highlight the fact that over 90% are the finest known and represent over 75% of all patterns issued including all denominations and varieties. Over 85% of the coins are plate coins for Kagin's book.

Most items have been weighed, independently graded, analyzed for metal composition, and provided with rarity and provenance. The latter includes such numismatic luminaries as Charles Bushnell, Captain Andrew Zabriskie, Colonel James Ellsworth, John Work Garrett, H.O. Grandberg, Waldo Newcomer, Virgil Brand, Henry Clifford, Abe Kosoff, E.J. Vallier and Art and Don Kagin.

*Limited copies of the \$20 catalog may be obtained by calling at 888-8KAGINS or emailing [info@kagins.com](mailto:info@kagins.com).*



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## Artifacts Found in Museum Construction *One Century's Trash is Another Century's Treasure*

**By Geoff Dornan**

It came as not surprise to anthropologist Gene Hattori when construction crews working on the Nevada State Museum project turned up signs of buried artifacts in the courtyard next to the historic old mint.

In fact, he anticipated it, making arrangements with Reyman Brothers Construction of Sparks before they even started digging.

Less than a week into the project to connect the old mint building with the museum annex, Hattori, curator of anthropology at the museum, and his assistant, Cindy Southerland, found themselves in a four-foot-deep trench, carefully outlining the walls of an old pit where workers at the mint long ago buried some trash.

The pit was next to where the old steam boiler that powered the coin presses and other machinery in the mint once sat.

"When they shut down at the end of the federal fiscal year, they'd replace the boiler tubes, replace the coin dies and bury the trash," He said. "We haven't found any assay crucibles, what I'm hoping to find is old coin dies."

A project sever years ago turned up several old coin dies, all deliberately damaged by mint officials so they couldn't be used to make counterfeits. Hattori said those were found just a few yards from the new dig.

After five days of careful probing – and with Southerland running every bit of dirt through a fine screen to make sure nothing is missed – they found a number of items for future study, including a piece of a crockery



ale bottle and a glass stopped for a chemical bottle. There were also fragments of other liquor bottles.

"And we did find a cast-iron rectangle, we do not know what it is," he said.

"Most of out work – two or three times the amount of time we spend recovering artifacts – we spend recovering artifacts – we spend researching and documenting," he said.

Hattori said *that* when digging in downtown Carson City, construction crews should just expect to find historic artifacts.

"The early settlement dates to the 1850's and '60s," he said. "If you dig anywhere in this area, you might find something."

Crews found something more disturbing a decade ago when they removed an old boiler behind the Ormsby County Courthouse at Carson and Musser streets – a piece of a skull later determined to be that of a teenage girl who died more than 100 years ago. The skull, believed to be at least part black, remains in the museum's collection.



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Hattori worked on that case as well.

said.

In the pit Friday, he pointed to a collection of steel barrel hoops. The wooden stays had long since rotted away. On the other side, he pointed to a thick layer of charcoal, evidence of the fires that powered the steam engine, which powered the coin presses through a series of leather belts.

He said he'll keep an eye on the construction as Reyman Brothers crews prepare to build the new structure.

"Part of our job will be monitoring any trenching," he said.

"If fact, there was an article in the Appeal at the time complaining about the cord wood piled too high on Curry Street," he

After all, for an anthropologist, it's more interesting than sitting in the office. And, you never know what might turn up.



Caption above reads:

~"Hello! Where are you off to now?"

~"Oh! I ain't a going to stop here, looking for teaspoons in cinders. I'm off to Kallifornies, yeah theres heaps o' gold dust to be had for the sweep'n."~

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## SOME INTERESTING RESTRIKES FROM THE CARSON CITY MINT

**By S.P.P.N. Member James W. Hunt**

Coinage of the Carson City Mint is a favorite of every coin collector who is interested in the Old West. The coinage of this mint is also highly desired and eagerly sought by many other collectors. Sometimes, an unusual opportunity presents itself enabling collectors to acquire an interesting memento of the Carson City Mint other than the modern medals produced for mint visitors.

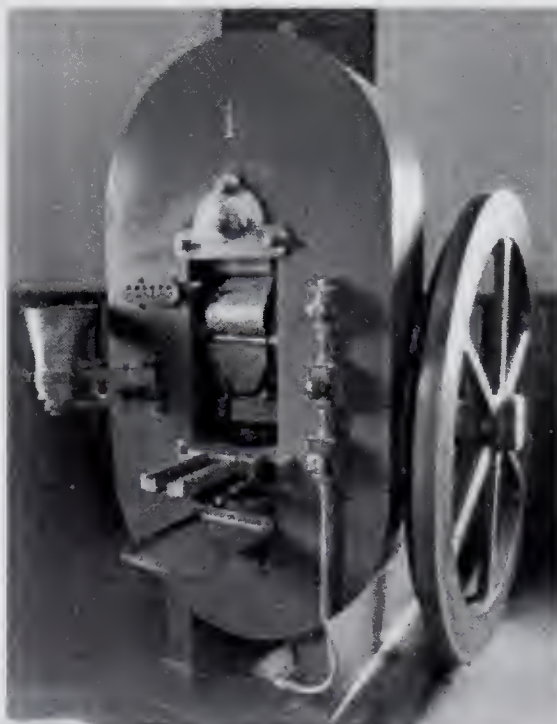
The U.S. Mint decided to improve their income from the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games Commemorative Coin program. They offered to sell the cancelled dies from certain of these coins. Those people lucky to be included in the early mailings were able to purchase the limited number of dies at \$49.00 each. While the mint has sold used dies in recent years, this offering was different. The dies sold now are totally defaced but these dies were "X" cancelled leaving the greater portion of the coin design still visible.

Now what on earth does this have to do with the Carson City Mint? Used dies from the Carson City Mint were "X" cancelled but the method of disposal was not by an announced sale to the public. The cancelled

dies were either given to friends of the Mint for such uses as doorstops or were just buried in the backyard of the Mint.

About 50 years ago I was allowed to use four of these dies as a prop for a speech on the seven U. S. mints that I gave at the East Bay Coin Club in Oakland, California. The die lender was a prominent Carson City Mint collector who expressed some concerns to me that the dies might be subject to gov-

ernment confiscation. The four dies were: reverses for a Liberty Seated Half Dollar, Morgan Silver Dollar, and a Liberty Head Twenty Dollar Gold Piece along with an unused (but cancelled) die for an 1885 Ten Dollar Gold Piece. Of course, the Carson City Mint never struck a Ten Dollar Gold Piece in 1885, but apparently had planned to do so. Back in the 1940's I had seen uniface strikings of an "X" cancelled Morgan Dollar and August 1997, I saw a couple of "X" cancelled Morgan Dollar dies at the Golden State Coin Show in Pasadena.



Now the connection! Once the U.S. Mint set the precedent of selling "X" cancelled dies, an opportunity was created for other owners of "X" cancelled dies. Such dies were in the possession of the Nevada State Museum. The owner of the Nevada City Mint (California) was able to borrow two "X" cancelled dies from the museum and pro-

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ceeded to make restrikes for the museum gift shop. All of the restrikes were supposed to be sold through the gift shop of the Nevada State Museum in Carson City. As most of you know, the museum is housed in the former mint facility. The museum has the original coin press used at the mint from the 1870's onward. This press has typically been used to strike medals for tourists. For a number of years, the Nevada City Mint struck these medals along with silver ingots labeled "Carson City Mint". I was told by the museum staff that the restrikes were not made on the old press for fear of breaking the dies. Rather, they were made on a hydraulic press at the Nevada City Mint in California. The dies used for the restriking were a slightly used 1884 Morgan Dollar obverse paired with a well used Morgan Dollar reverse die.

I was told that three items were struck from the old dies. 100 one ounce silver planchets were struck using the reverse die and then outfitted as money clips. 25 obverse and 25 reverse uniface strikings were also made on one ounce silver planchets. In addition, 25 strikings using both the obverse and reverse dies were made on two ounce silver planchets. The owner of the Nevada City Mint was purported to have said that the two-sided impressions could only be effected on a two ounce planchet and only with great pressure. The dies and restrikes were subsequently returned to the museum the end of September and no further striking was anticipated. The one ounce uniface strikings and the two ounce pieces had sold very well as only a few remained in October 1997 when I visited the museum. A neater souvenir of the Carson City Mint is hard to contemplate. The numbers struck are also minute when compared to the regular strikings of the 1884 Carson City Mint Silver Dollar. The cost of a one ounce piece was \$30.00 and the two ounce pieces cost \$60.00 each.

I hope that you find this information to be new and interesting. Hopefully, it adds to your knowledge about the old Carson City Mint.





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## Who Was E. G. Chormann?

### *The Clark Gruber Connection*

By S.P.P.N. Member Anthony C. LaVerghetta

Who was E. G. Chormann? And what was his connection to the Clark Gruber Gold Coins? I will in this article try to tie it all together. Initially I began to research Ernest G. Chormann when I was shown some very interesting 19mm. tokens struck in copper and copper nickel, with some very interesting design elements. First, the wavy pattern had me thinking what an eye-catching design, then the letters E.G.C. and finally the date 1861 with an odd looking 6.

What a very special date it would turn out to be. What I mean to say is, the date logo punch exactly matches the style and shape of the 1861 date on the Clark Gruber 2 ½ dollar gold coins. The shape of the 6 in the date is very distinctive. Many of you may be thinking "just a coincidence" but I don't think so. I was so intrigued by the tokens, especially the quality of workmanship. I had to find out more so I began to do some research and I soon found out that there was very little information available.

I was able to put together a time line that I feel sheds some light on an unanswered question many of us have regarding who cut the dies for the Clark Gruber gold



coins. Being a token and medal collector, one of my first ideas was to check and see if Chormann was listed as a die-sinker or engraver. After going through my library, I hit pay-dirt. Deep in the recesses of R. W. Julian's book on United States Medals, I found that Chormann did some contract work for none other than the U.S.

Mint from 1853-1860 where his is credited for engraving two medals.

AM 67-AM 68 the 1855 dated Pennsylvania Institute of Philadelphia Medals. Now I was getting really excited. I was then shown three other lead tokens also engraved by Chormann. I immediately noticed a similarity in the facial profile of the seated liberty figure, the Pennsylvania Institute of Philadelphia medal and the Clark Gruber 2 ½ dollar gold coin.

I knew I had to find out more about Chormann so I contacted the free library of Philadelphia, who verified that Chormann was listed in Boyd's Directory with an address of 41 N. 6<sup>th</sup> Street Philadelphia, as a die-sinker copper plate and steel engraver from 1853 until after 1861.

Interestingly Chormann, a decorated colonel, was called into duty in September 1861 to muster the 8<sup>th</sup> cavalry known as "Chormann's Rifle Ranger Regiment". Oddly he retired from his post for unknown reasons only four months later in January of 1862. What he did after the Civil



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War is somewhat sketchy. He was listed as doing some woodworking in the 1870's and 1880's. Also some painting in his later years. One of his works "Letitia Street House" is held in a museum in the Philadelphia area. Armed with this information, I began to try to explore the possibility that Chormann cut the dies for the Clark Gruber gold coins. We know that in December 1859 Milton Clark traveled from Colorado to Philadelphia to buy dies and presses. It is likely he went first to the U.S. Mint and was promptly referred to Chormann as the Mint was very busy at this time and likely did not want to be involved with preparing dies for a private Mint.

I theorized Chormann had some tokens already prepared possibly as business cards to show his ability as an engraver. It is quite possible that Clark was shown these to demonstrate the quality he could expect. This is where a researcher's job becomes very difficult. I reached a point where I knew I had it solved; all I needed was one more piece to the puzzle. A check from Clark to Chormann rendered or some sort of paper trail indicating the exchange took place. Something, anything!!

Well, I guess it's kind of like the movie "National Treasure." One clue leads to another and another and then....





# *Brasher Bulletin*

## Pioneer of the Year Award

*By Associate Editor Lena DeMarco*

E.J. "Jim" Vallier was presented the 2007 Pioneer of the Year Award at the annual SPPN meeting at Milwaukee ANA. Jim is a charter and life member of SPPN. He is a descendant of California and Alaskan gold rush pioneers. When David Showers passed responsibility of publishing SPPN to Kagin's Jim did the yeoman work. He has committed his time soliciting and submitting articles suitable for publication. A true collectors advocate Jim is easily approachable and knowledgeable. He has worked tirelessly since its inception to make SPPN what it is today.



Jim has been an active collector of Pioneer Gold for 50 years. Starting with an inherited collection he won 1<sup>st</sup> place Junior at the 1962 Northern California Jack Tar Show. He was an officer of the Liberty Numismatic Society in the early sixties. Related to Nevada casino interests Jim was allowed to go through circulated bags of silver dollars. Then one night the bags started coming all one date uncirculated. The rest is history. Jim built Carson City, pioneer gold and pattern collections. He has attended and participated in all major pioneer gold auctions for 45 years. His favorite auctions were the Walton, Beck, Garrett, Brand, Elisaberg and of course the Clifford. His mentors were E.A. Parker, Ronnie Carr, Jack Klausen, Abner Kreisberg & Jerry Cohen, Art and Don Kagin. He likes to say his Pioneer Pattern Collection going to Robert Bass was similar to Elisaberg purchasing the Clapp Collection. His current collecting interests center on Art of the West.

# Brasher Bulletin

## On Wall Street, a Gold Bug Goes Straight to the Source

*Rick Sherlund Gets to Play With His Own Bulldozer; Alaskan Family Vacations*

**By Robert A. Guth**

Central, Alaska—Like a lot of other professional investors, Rick Sherlund this year has loaded up on gold as the dollar dipped and stocks sank. Unlike his Wall Street peers, Mr. Sherlund gets his gold while sitting atop a 55-ton bulldozer with a pistol strapped to his side.

The pistol, .50 -caliber Smith & Wesson, is protection from grizzly bears. The bulldozer, a Carerpillar D9T with a 15-foot blade, is for moving the tons of rock and dirt separating Mr. Sherlund from the gold—tiny flakes and bigger nuggets buried 10 feet below the surface at his own gold mine. If you strike gold on wall street you can do pretty much whatever you want for fun, and fun for Mr. Sherlund is grubbing for gold deep in the Alaskan wilderness. With gold prices hitting record levels, it's a pursuit than eventually might be profitable for him. It isn't yet, but that isn't the point. "Some people have a passion for running big equipment and looking for gold," he explains. In finance and technology circles, Mr. Sherlund is known as the former dean of Wall Street's Microsoft analysts, a market mover with the reports he wrote in two decades at Goldman Sachs Group. Early this year, he quit to become a managing director investing in technology stocks at Galleon Group, a \$7 billion hedge fund in New York.

Mr. Sherlund made millions at Goldman, and he stands to make more money if



Galleon does well. But his career kept him chained to his desk on conference calls and staring at statistics.

Six years ago, he took a trip to Alaska, acting on an urge for something different and a longtime interest in gold mining. Soon, he says, "it sort of took on a life of its own."

Now every summer, Mr. Sherlund heads north, moves into a thin-walled bunkhouse, stops shaving and gathers a motley crew of relatives, friends and locals to work a mine tucked in the hills near the rustic town of Central.

It's an annual ritual that this year started in July when Mr. Sherlund packed his bags for Fairbanks. A few days later, after a three-hour drive on a gravel road into the wilderness, he turned right at a bullet-riddled sign that once read "Ketchem Creek." Soon Mr. Sherlund stood with gnats swirling around his head scanning his gold



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mine and an assortment of heavy equipment scrapping and piling a vast field of dirt and rocks. His extended family including his father, stepmother, brother and nephews had joined, flying and driving in from around the country to dig for gold. His wife and two sons relaxed at the family's vacation home in Nantucket.

Mr. Sherlund wore a soiled Carhartt baseball cap, muddy jeans and a belt with inlaid Indian head nickels. The eight acre mine—which he works under agreement with the mine's claim holder—is surrounded by mountains of white birch and green shrubs. The land is grizzly-bear territory; he hedges that risk with the revolver holstered at his hip, but he has never had to shoot a bear. Mr. Sherlund's brother Mick, up from Utah where he works at a diesel-engine maker, was in the cockpit of the bulldozer scraping earth into a pile. Nearby, Mr. Sherlund's nephew Shane manipulated the long arm of a Caterpillar excavator to feed the dirt from the pile into a trammel: a big rotating barrel with water flowing through it that spits out large rocks on one end and directs silt and small stones into a sluice, a long bed of metal louvers that trap the gold.

Later that day Mr. Sherlund found a bit of what he came looking for, washed out of the dirt:

"There's a little nugget right there," he said, picking up a small

piece of gold and displaying it in his palm. Mr. Sherlund is following a well-worn path of prospectors who first came in the 1898 Klon-

dike Gold Rush and then spread through Alaska. Some struck it rich, while most re-treated or died empty-handed. These days high fuel costs, depleted stream beds and tougher regulations make it increasingly difficult for small time mines like Mr. Sherlund's. "They go broke sooner or later," said Fred Wilkinson, a

71-year-old miner whom Mr. Sherlund calls his mentor. "Unless you've got Wall Street backing you," he jokes.

Mr. Sherlund's miner origins are rooted in gold-panning trips he took as a kid with his father in the foothills of Northern California, but it was a 1998 cruise with his own son that brought the analyst to Alaska. Intrigued by the size of the nuggets in Alaskan gift shops, Mr. Sherlund asked a nugget dealer for an introduction to a miner who later guided him to Ketchum Creek, about five miles from Central.



Mr. Sherlund and a friend panned the area, but the effort yielded little more than bug bites and back pain. He did find some gold and soon upgraded his equipment—in 2005, buying the excavator, followed by the bulldozer last year. He says he has sunk about \$2 million altogether into the operation. The equipment boosted his take—he scraped up \$50,000 in

gold in 2005 and \$60,000 last year. But since he digs just a few weeks a year, Mr. Sherlund realizes he'll likely be losing money



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for a while.

That's OK. This summer, Mr. Sherlund spent hours each day in the excavator's air-conditioned cab loading dirt into the plant as National Public Radio played in his ears. He would occasionally check on his crew at the final stage of separating the gold from sand and pebbles or take off into the woods with a pan and trowel to look for new spots to dig. Taking a break one day, he and his crew shot off a few rounds with pistols and rifles into a block of wood. Climbing a nearby peak on the foot he looked out over the Alaska wilderness. "This is about as far away as you can get from Wall Street." After nine days in Alaska, Mr. Sherlund headed home and prepared for his first day back at the office. Up at 5:00a.m., he shaved his beard, put on a pressed shirt and brown Italian loafers. At the office, he couldn't at first access his computer system for checking stock quotes. It uses a fingerprint reader for security—and Mr. Sherlund's hands were so chafed from mining that it didn't recognize him. A duffle bag on the floor held the fruits of his Alaska trip, a 10-pound brick, some loose flakes and nuggets in some glass vials.

The value of the gold has risen quickly as investors buy the precious metal as a haven from the turmoil hitting financial markets. Gold futures last week broke \$830 an ounce, their highest level since the 1980's while the stock market took a beating. The tech stocks Mr. Sherlund is paid to buy and sell haven't escaped the drubbing. The lure of gold mining notwithstanding, "right now I'm keeping my day Job," he says.





# *Brasher Bulletin*

## Coloma

*Compiled By Amanda Garl*



Here is where the great California gold rush had its beginning. Just north of Placerville, Coloma was the home of Johan Sutter whose name will be forever linked to the gold rush days. Sutter came to California from his native Switzerland in 1834 and was granted some land on the Sacramento River. It was toward the end of 1847 that Sutter began construction of his sawmill at a site the Indians called Cullooma. Sutter had a partner named James Marshall in building the sawmill. It was Marshall, not Sutter, who first discovered gold at Sutter's Mill. Ironically, neither Sutter or Marshall profited from a discovery which should have made them independently wealthy. Among the things to see while visiting Coloma is the home of James Marshall at the time of his discovery in 1849 as well as his grave which overlooks the site of his discovery.



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Settled along the banks of the South Fork between Sutter's Mill and Mormon Island is the first important mining town of the 1848 gold rush days. By the summer of 1848 Coloma had about 300 frame buildings and a big hotel under construction. Because of the remoteness of the location, prices were outrageous. Almost any commodity sold at the flat rate of a dollar a

pound. Shovels and picks were at least \$50 each. Wool shirts sold for \$50 each. Since the dollar was worth at least 100 times more than it is today, such prices were outlandish. But Coloma's hectic days were numbered. Richer localities up and down the Mother Lode were drawing away her residents. By 1870 Coloma was reduced to 200 residents. Where gold was discovered is now a state park with appropriate historical markers and an extensive museum. Some of the original frame buildings still stand and have been preserved as historical markers of the first town to emerge from the gold rush days of 1848.





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## The Virgil Earp Token

*An Authentic Pioneer Minor Coin of the Wild West*

By Fred N. Holabird

to his sons Virgil and Wyatt.

### Introduction

Western history enthusiasts have long known about an extremely rare token bearing lawman Virgil Earp's name for Sawtelle California, the only surviving coin from America's most famous lawman family, the Earps of Tombstone fame. It is thought that there are less than three of these tokens known in any condition. Good for five cents and made of aluminum, it has long been thought that the token was made for use in a saloon, the long-standing business of choice for the Earp family. New research has found that the token dates from the 1091-1903 period when Virgil and his brother James were living and working in Sawtelle, next to the Veterans Home where their father Nick Earp was residing for medical care.

### Virgil Earp and His family roots

Virgil Earp was born in 1843 in Ohio County, Kentucky. The family worked a farm, though his father Nicholas (Nick) held many different jobs, including as a constable and stage driver, occupations which would be passed along naturally



Virgil served in the Civil War for the Union Army with his brothers James and Newton and at least one other relative. Enlisted in 1862 in Illinois at the age of nineteen, he was a 5'10" blonde, blue-eyed soldier. Earp was married and the father of a daughter when he left the Army, but his wife's father concocted a story about Virgil's death, and the young lady was convinced to move westward, where she again married. Thirty five years later, she would see her "dead" husband, a true life living ghost. Their daughter was later the sole surviving heir.

### To California and the Gold Rush

Nick Earp went to the California Gold Rush in 1851, and thinking of returning to Kentucky or Illinois, he went through the fledgling new community of San Bernardino, California. In 1864, Nick moved the whole family west as a part of a large 40 wagon, 150 person wagon train. Brothers Wyatt, Morgan, Warren, and James were with the family. James had been wounded in the shoulder in the War. He left the wagon train in Austin, Nevada, where he discovered a

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taste for gambling and saloons. Nick continued on as wagon master.

Virgil left the was a stagecoach driver. He worked in Nebraska, Iowa, Wyoming, and Missouri, according to several resources. Along the way one of his jobs was to run stages and freight wagons through Prescott, Arizona and San Bernardino. The family returned to Missouri for 1870, where they worked a farm and ran a store and restaurant. There Virgil married his second wife, Rosalia Dragoo, who seems to have disappeared as quickly as she appeared. Virgil met his third wife Allie in 1873 in Nebraska whole a stage driver and the couple remained together for the rest of his life.

By 1876, Wyatt Earp and some of the brothers had become law officers in various Kansas towns, including the infamous Dodge City. By 1877, Virgil was in Prescott, probably as a wagon master or stage driver. Once there, Virgil was almost immediately involved in a shootout that would shape the rest of his career as a powerful lawman. The next year, Virgil was driving stage in and out of local mining camps such as Tip Top, where the well-producing Peck Mine was located. Within no time at all, Virgil was named Constable. There he met John Behan, who was to become his lifelong nemesis. Though little or nothing is known of their relationship until the famous shootout at the OK Corral in Tombstone in 1881.

## **Tombstone and the OK Corral**

Tombstone drew the Earp brothers in 1879. Virgil was a mining camp lawman (deputy U.S. Marshall), and Wyatt was

hoping to open a stage line. The staked mining claims, conducted business, and



looked for ways to make more money, the same as any entrepreneur in a new mining camp.

Much has been written of the OK Corral. After months of tension between cowboys and Tombstone lawmen, fights broke out and men were killed. It culminated in a gunfight at the OK Corral. Morgan Earp was killed, along with others, that set the stage for the Earps as the ultimate western no-nonsense tough guys.

The families moved to Colton, California where Nick has been managing the Gem Saloon since 1880. He and other members of the family had also briefly resided in Temescal, the site of the first tin rush in America, when tin was worth nearly the same price as gold.

## **Mining and Saloons in Southern California**

By 1893 Virgil had mining fever all over again and headed out to Vanderbilt, on the eastern outskirts of California near



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the Nevada border. There he ran the Whist Club Saloon. His wife Allie would later recount "Two-three years at the most was all we could seem to stand in one place, we was that restless."

By 1900 Virgil was living in Kirkland Valley, Yavapai County, Arizona, a remote



area away from Prescott. In 1901, Virgil applied for a gambling license in Colton, but was turned down. His father Nick had become ill, and had been placed in the Veterans Home in Sawtelle. Virgil's brother James came to live nearby to help care for their father. Virgil began selling off his Arizona properties that year which he continued for at least another year. For the brief period of 1901-1903 both James and Virgil lived part to gill time in Sawtelle over-seeing their father Nick's health.

## **Sawtelle, California**

Sawtelle was a quiet community born of the San Vincente land grant, a place where the historic Sepulveda family of Los Angeles fame lived in adobe houses as Californios in the early 1800's. The ruins of their adobes lasted until just after 1900, as reported by Ingersoll. Just

three miles from the beach community of Santa Monica, Sawtelle was the product of the Pacific Land Company, first managed by S.H. Taft. As the town and the need for a Post Office began to grow the name was changed to Sawtelle, in honor of another developer W.E. Sawtelle, who would succeed Taft in 1899 as manager of the Pacific Land Company. Lots were originally sold for \$80 to \$100 each, and corner lots for \$150-\$200.

Many of the new residents of Sawtelle were veterans or relatives who wanted to be near their family at Veterans Home, one of many like-named places established for sick, injured, aging or indigent war veterans. Veterans Home at Sawtelle held more than 2000 men. As a requirement by the Government for the establishment of Veterans Home, a law was passed that there be no saloons within a 1.5 mile distance, thus by 1904 there were no saloons in Sawtelle. A newspaper was established there in 1901. The first two story brick building was erected in 1903 and later that year the first bank came to town. Sawtelle was annexed to Los Angeles in 1922.

## **Nevada Mining Camps and the Earps**

In 1901, Virgil's brother Wyatt returned from Nome, where he owned the Dexter Saloon. He went to the new booming Nevada mining camp of Tonopah, where he ran the Northern Saloon. Exceptionally rich gold deposits were found at Goldfield, about 30 miles south of Tonopah in 1903, and Wyatt told Virgil about the new discoveries. Ever the wanderlust, Allie and Virgil were off to Goldfield by mid-1904, where Virgil became deputy sheriff of Esmerelda

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County. Additionally, he was a "special officer" of the National, a popular saloon. Wyatt's friend Tex Rickard opened Northern Saloon in Goldfield about that time. He had run the Northern Saloon in Nome, and was the one who got Wyatt back into the saloon business convincing him to buy the Dexter Saloon there.

Virgil died in October 1905 of pneumonia in Goldfield. Ten others died that month from the outbreak. His daughter buried him on Portland Oregon.

## The Earp Coin

The Virgil Earp token (coin) must date from the 1901-1903 period, and is quite probably from 1902-1903, after Virgil and James had established residence in Sawtelle to care for their father Nick. As long time saloon owners, the Earp family were experts at saloon management, and the token certainly must reflect the ownership of one in Sawtelle.

Veterans were heavy drinkers, as evidenced by this quote from Ingersoll (*History of Santa Monica bay Cities*, 1908): "After :pension day" a larger number usually went out on furlough, and some of them spend their money foolishly." This led to the passing of a law outlawing saloons within a mile and a half of Veterans Home. The Earp's saloon either was 1.51 miles away or more (easily attainable in Sawtelle) or was operating before the law was passed. Either way, the saloon was short-lived. Virgil left for Goldfield, where he died.

By 1905 there were no saloons in Saw-

telle, as evidenced by the Suits-Schuman *California Gazetteer*. The move to protect Veterans from spending their money at nearby saloons was successful.

The Earp coin is only known in the five cent denomination. This denomination could have covered a number of different things, though it was generally good for a glass of cheap beer. A ten cent beer would have been a better brand. Cigars sold in saloons were generally two and a half cents. Shots of bourbon were generally one bit, or twelve and a half cents.

There is no maker shown on the coin, which was probably made by a Los Angeles die maker in 1902. The largest such company at the time was the Los Angeles Rubber Stamp Co., who made similar coinage, and later marked their coins at the bottom of the obverse with "LARS" or "LARS Co." Kappan interviewed the owner of the company in 1964 who stated that they made tokens as early as 1887 to 1891. They had issued tokens for local merchants prior to that date, though they made contract C.H. son of cago, a known sinker.



## Provenance

Few of these tokens exist in collections today. Only one has surfaced publicly.



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It was offered on eBay about seven years ago, and abruptly pulled from auction when the bid reached nearly \$3000. It is thought that there are less than five specimens known, possibly three in any condition. This specimen is the best of two seen by the author. It was found in the Goldfield dump by token hunter and antique dealer Lee Howard in the 1970's. long time collector and Carson City Sheriff Hal Dunn purchased the coin from Howard, and it remained in his collection until after his death in 2007. he piece is so rare that it was not known at the time of the publication of Charlie Kappan's *California Trade Tokens* in 1976, but since was listed in the Supplement because of the Dunn specimen 9 (this piece). This token was probably owned by Earp himself since he went from Sawtelle to Goldfield where he died.

Nash, JR; *Encyclopedia of Western Lawmen and Outlaws*; 1991 Chaput, D.; *Virgil Earp, Western Peace Officer*; 1994.

The author's great grandfather, William H. Holabird, was a real estate promoter in San Bernardino from the 1870's to the 1880's. He regularly wrote a column on real estate for the San Bernardino newspaper. He would have known Nick Earp.

Behan was a democrat, and Earp was a Republican. Their opposing political vies collided on many occasions.

Chaput, p182.

1900 U.S. Census for Arizona Territory, There was only one page of entries for Kirkland Valley.  
A number of Veterans Homes were established in America. One of these is just outside Napa, California. Pioneer coinage is known from these places, generally used in the circa 1900-1915 period.

Ingersoll, L.; *Santa Monica Bay Cities*; 1908. Spaulding, W.A.; *History and Reminiscences of Los Angeles City and County*, VI, 1930.

P343  
1905 edition.

Supplemented by Maxwell's Los Angeles Directory for 1898, p640. Kappan, C.; *California Tokens*; 1976.

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# Brasher Bulletin

## Three Discoveries

*By S.P.P.N. Member Mike Locke*

Reports of new discoveries of California Fractional Gold are now infrequent. However, careful examination of already attributed coins can reveal previously unreported varieties. This article describes 3 newly discovered varieties of California Small Denomination Gold (CSDG) together with proposed Breen-Gillio numbers.

BG719a

BG821a

BG1013a

**BG719a** is a muling of known dies: the obverse of BG719 and BG720 paired with the reverse of BG715. It is worth noting that the reverse of BG715 and the reverse of BG719 are very similar. The discovery specimen was PCGS certified as BG719. The obverse is in a similar die state to BG720, with a prominent rust lump in the field between the neck and star 8. The reverse is in a later die state than BG715, with the ribband on the right separated from the bow loop.



**BG821a** pairs the well known obverse of BG821 with a new reverse. The new reverse is very similar to the reverse of BG821. This situation is similar to the contemporary strikings of BG1015 "DSI", BG1015 "DSII", BG1016, and BG1016a. The reverse die used to strike BG821a is cracked in half and has a large rim cud at K3, indicating that the mintage was probably very small. The discovery specimen was PCGS certified as BG821.



Compared to the reverse of BG821, the reverse of BG821a has

- Level, thicker solidus





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- Larger D in DOLLAR
  - Berry stem above D is longer
  - Top of 1 in date is above top of 8
- Leaf directly below 4 is longer and connected to wreath

**BG1013a** is struck from the exact dies of BG434, but on one of Robert Gray's gold plated gold planchets. This is similar to BG915a, which is struck with the exact dies of BG311 but on one of Gray's planchets. Unlike BG915a, BG1013a and BG1014 are struck using the reeded edge collar of BG434. The collar orientation relative to the obverse die appears to be fixed. BG1013a is lighter than BG434 or BG1014, although it is unclear that is diagnostic. To date, the only reliable means to positively identify BG1013a or BG915a is via defects in the planchet, although BG1013a DSII may be distinguished by the position of the clash marks. Perfect specimens are likely to be overlooked, so the rarity of BG1013a is unknown. The entire emission sequence of BG434, BG1013a, and BG1014 is enumerated below.

- BG434 0.54-0.58 grams, solid gold planchet
  - DSI: Dies perfect and reverse bold. Not seen but should exist
  - DSII: Heavy clash, reverse bold. Clash orientation puts reverse berry under lowest curl.
  - DSIII: Faint diagonal crack under date. Clash marks show faintly. Seen with perfect coin orientation and 20° rotation.<sup>1</sup>
- BG1013a 0.47-0.50 grams, gold plated gold planchet
  - DSI: Clash fully faded out. Both dies rusted near rim.<sup>2</sup>
  - DSII: Clashed again, this time as seen on BG1014 DSI. Clash orientation puts reverse berry above lowest curl, a difference of only a few degrees from BG434 DSII.
- BG1014 0.58 grams, gold plated gold planchet
  - DSI: Obverse clashed as on BG1013a. Reverse re-engraved with 1860 date shows crack under date but no clash marks.
  - DSII: Both dies heavily clashed.
- BG434 DSIII and BG1014 DSII appear to be the most common states.

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<sup>1</sup> DS with no crack has not been seen. However, the crack is always very faint and can be invisible in a picture or missed in a quick examination. The reported state with obverse rim cud cannot exist.

<sup>2</sup> Reported as BG434 DSIII at 0.49 grams in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of California Pioneer Fractional Gold by Breen and Gillio

# Brasher Bulletin

## Couple Volunteers at Museum for the Love of it!

*Submitted by S.P.P.N. Member Jim Vallier*

The medallion Ken Hopple pressed at the Nevada State Museum was a commemorative medallion for former Nevada Speaker of the Assembly Joe Dini in the fall of 2002.

He's also pressed medallions for most Nevada towns, the Nevada Legislature, and requests from special-interest groups.

"We use different metals to press the medallions," Hopple said. "Brass, copper, silver – I have done gold for the Nevada Legislature – silver clad and nickel."

Hopple, 61, was pressing a brass medallion recently for Nevada's 74<sup>th</sup> State Legislature – 2007. The front of the coin shows tule duck decoy, and the Nevada State Seal on the back.

"I'm a tool and die maker by trade," said Hopple, a senior



tool maker for the Hamilton Co. in Reno. His profession is called a numismatist.

Ken's wife, Karen, 53, does research work at home on the computer and helps design medallions.

"I make my own hours and do my own thing," Karen said, as she cleaned the plastic medallion cases while wearing white gloves.

The Hopples have been volunteers at the Nevada State Museum for about five years. Married 29 years they have lived in Golden Valley for 27.

"Imagine meeting this guy and listening to when he does and had done," he took

me to see the King Tut exhibit on our honeymoon."

Ken started out as a volunteer in the anthropology department. He made a part for the coin press

and, according to Karen, "he was stolen from the anthropology department to be a volunteer on the coin press."

Now, the Hopples are at the museum the fourth Friday of each month operating the press and talking with visitors to the museum about the history of the press, coins and medallions.

"Ken's a natural talker," Karen said. "We have a lot of fun doing this."

"Nevada is the only former mint with an original working press," Ken said.

Bob Nylen, curator of history of the Nevada State Museum, said there have been only eight mints in operation



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throughout the United States. They are New Orleans, Charlotte, N.C., Carson City, Dahlonega, Ga., Philadelphia, Denver, San Francisco and West Point, N.Y.

The bullion depository at Fort Knox is also part of the Mint system. New Orleans, Charlotte and Carson City are all now museums, with the Old San Francisco mint in process of being converted into a museum.

Ken Hopple's interests go beyond anthropology and coins. In 1972 he built a 48-foot ferrous cement boat and sailed it to Hawaii.

"It took me three and a half years to build it," he said. "And I had a machine shop on board."

It took Hoppel 22 days to get to Hawaii from Southern California.

Hopple used the machine shop to make money while moored in Hawaii, enough to pay for his return to California.

"I'm also a black powder shooter – guns," he said.

From Anaheim, Calif., Ken's employer – Quick Set – relocated to Nevada, so the couple moved to Nevada, also. He has a degree in manufacturing from Cal State Fullerton.

"We press the last Friday of each month and a couple of Saturdays throughout the year," Karen Hopple said.

"The medallions are for the gift shop or commemorative medallions for cities."

## BRASHER BULLETIN

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# Brasher Bulletin

## Last Laugh

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### HOW DID PEOPLE RUSH TO THE GOLD?

ON JAN. 24, 1848, SOMETHING WASHES UP IN THE AMERICAN RIVER, NEAR JOHN SUTTER'S CALIFORNIA SAWMILL.



GOLD HAD APPEARED AT PLACERITA CANYON SIX YEARS EARLIER, WHEN MEXICO OWNED CALIFORNIA. BUT NOW THE UNITED STATES CONTROLS THIS TERRITORY









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**Pioneer Gold, Currency**



**Fred Holabird**  
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